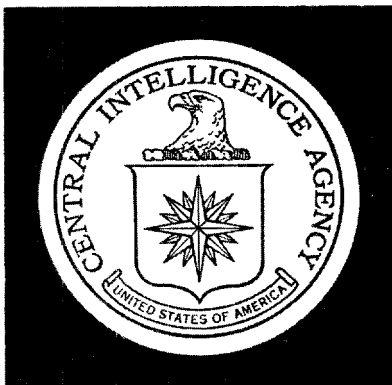


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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# *WEEKLY SUMMARY*

## *Special Report*

*France Girds for Elections*

State Dept. review  
completed

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FRANCE GIRDS FOR ELECTIONS

The campaign is warming up for the elections, tentatively scheduled on 5 and 12 March 1967, to fill all 482 seats in the French National Assembly. The two principal opposition groupings hope to capitalize on the national prominence gained in the 1965 presidential races by Francois Mitterrand on the left and Jean Lecanuet at the center. Both groupings also hope to benefit from the after-effects of the psychological blow the Gaullists suffered when the general had to submit to a second ballot against Mitterrand. The fact that the opposition is not united, however, diminishes its hope of inhibiting De Gaulle's "personal rule." The Gaullists seem to be doing a better job than the opposition in muting their internal differences. They recognize that their prospects for survival as a political force in the post - De Gaulle era would be greatly enhanced by another five-year term as the majority party.

The Federation of the Democratic  
And Socialist Left

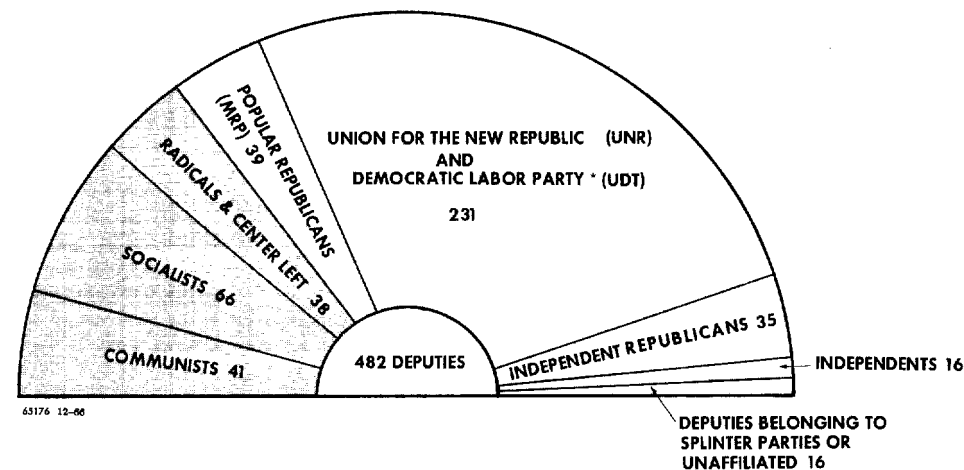
Mitterrand's Federation of the Democratic and Socialist Left is the most broadly based of the opposition groupings, and its leadership is working to make it the eventual rallying point for union of the entire left including the Communist Party (PCF). Already formally pledged to the Federation are the Radical Party, the Socialist Party (SFIO), the Convention of Republican Institutions, and various political clubs. The Federation is seeking to paper over differences among its diverse elements in preparation for the election, but it has failed to get agreement on electoral strategy, largely because the Federation's various parties were themselves

unable to decide on strategy in their own respective congresses. Some accept the need to cooperate with Lecanuet's followers, while others attach greater importance to expanding relations with the Communists as a step toward union of the entire left.

The controversy is exemplified by the experience of the Socialists, the best organized of the Federation parties, who at their recent congress approved suggestions that were obviously intended as an "opening" toward the Communists. This action was designed in part to allay the threat that the Communists might damage the Socialists' electoral prospects by maintaining candidates against Socialists on the

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PARTY STRENGTHS IN FRENCH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY  
Elected November 1962



\*These Gaullist parties command a majority because of regular backing from Independent Republicans and occasional backing from Radicals and Popular Republicans.

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MAJOR POLITICAL GROUPINGS IN FRANCE

GROUP	FEDERATION OF DEMOCRATIC AND SOCIALIST LEFT	DEMOCRATIC CENTER	GAULLIST "FAMILY"
DATE OF FORMATION	December 1965	February 1966	
PRESIDENT	Francois Mitterrand	Jean Lecanvet	Jacques BaumeI, UNR/UDT Valery Giscard d'Etaing, Independent Republicans
PARTICIPANTS	Socialist Party Radical Party Convention of Republican Institutions Political clubs	MRP Independent Party Political clubs	UNR UDT Independent Republicans
ORGANIZATIONAL AIM	To seek a common program and electoral strategy, while allowing participating parties to preserve separate identities	To fuse existing parties into organic union	Temporarily organized into Action Committee for the Fifth Republic for electoral purposes
ELECTORAL APPEAL	Return to parliamentary ascendency; program of wide-ranging economic and social change; moderate movement toward more inde- pendent foreign policy	Abolition of "personal rule"; foreign policy based on European and Atlantic coop- eration; moderate forward movement in economic and social field	Institutional stability embodied in presidential system; independence in foreign policy; re-establishment of French: "grandeur";economic stabilization

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second, run-off, ballot. (Under the French system, if no candidate receives a majority of votes on the first ballot, a second ballot is held among all candidates receiving a designated proportion of the votes.) The SFIO is particularly sensitive on this issue because 44 of the 66 Socialist deputies were elected in 1962 only because the Communists voted for them on the second round. Moreover, the Socialists want to soften the effect of the Federation's decision in October to reject the PCF demand for an agreement on automatic reciprocal withdrawals in the run-off vote in favor of the best-placed candidate of the left. The SFIO wants to keep the door open because it believes that its objectives cannot be achieved without the support of the PCF.

On the other hand, although the Socialist congress leveled much of its fire at Jean Lecanuet and his Democratic Center, it did not reject him completely. The US Embassy in Paris comments that the Socialists' attitude seems to be that "marriage with the Center at a later date is not unthinkable, but that an announcement of an engagement in the present circumstances would be scandalous."

The Convention of Republican Institutions, the least important Federation member, has gone further than the Socialists in seeking accord with the Communists. It has recommended that the Federation accept Communist demands for a reciprocal withdrawal

agreement, and avoid electoral understandings with the Center even when there might be advantages in arranging them with certain individual candidates.

Only the Radical Party congress adopted a report that clearly rejected the idea of making the Communist Party the "privileged ally" of the Federation. The Radicals hold that if approaches on possible electoral deals are to be made to the Communists, similar approaches should be made to the Center. The party's ambivalence is a result of its electoral experience in 1962, when about half the Radicals owed their election to Communist/Socialist withdrawals in favor of Radical candidates on the second round, while the other half had support from the Center.

In short, the Federation knows it needs Communist votes to defeat the Gaullists, but it is not prepared to sacrifice its basic program to get them. The Communists, for their part, had initially insisted that agreement on a common program would have to be signed if an electoral accord were to be worked out.

Just before Christmas, both sides made an attempt to adapt their ideological divergencies to the electoral situation. The value of the alliance announced on 21 December is open to question, however. This announcement called for the parties concerned to unite behind the leftist with the best chance of beating the

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Gaullist in any electoral district, but it also restated the different positions of each side. Moreover, each group retains its liberty of action, and agrees merely to examine each situation after the first ballot. It is unlikely that all elements in the Federation will consider that the accord rules out the possibility of supporting a candidate of the Center on the second ballot.

The Democratic Center

Jean Lecanuet's Democratic Center includes his own party--the Popular Republican Movement--the Independents, and some individual Radicals. The Center has a considerably narrower political base than the Federation, is short of funds, and is subject to other growing pains, including a difference in outlook between its old "pros" and a crop of younger, more progressive leaders.

Facing competition from the Federation on its left and from the Gaullists on its right, the Center can expect only minimal electoral gains. It hopes, however, that its middle position will enable it to play a key role in the election.

A recent poll indicated that the idea of some kind of government majority including Lecanuet is attractive to a sizable fraction of voters of every political shade from the Communists to the Gaullists. The average Communist voter might reason that any dilution of the Gaullist majority would mean a less authoritarian--and hence more desirable--government. Communist Party leaders

might see it as an opportunity to separate the Federation from the Center, thereby pushing the Federation into the waiting arms of the Communists.

Lecanuet's hope of transforming this sort of feeling into solid electoral support has been dimmed, however, by a new electoral law. Candidates must now gain at least ten percent of the registered voters on the first ballot rather than, as formerly, five percent of the votes cast. Allowing for a 25-percent abstention rate, the average in recent elections, candidates will now be obliged to obtain approximately 13 percent of the votes cast to avoid elimination on the first round.

The government publicly justified the new law as an inducement for opposition parties to concert their efforts before the first round.

Many of its candidates would be eliminated on the first ballot, thereby dashing the Center's hope of being the key "swing" element in bargaining on withdrawals between rounds.

However, Gaullists believe that it was Lecanuet's candidacy in the 1965 presidential election that forced De Gaulle into a second ballot, and they clearly regard him as the number-one rival for the conservative-oriented vote. In the 1965 election, Lecanuet did best in traditionally conservative areas,

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indicating that he gained most of his votes in Gaullist rather than leftist strongholds. The leftist parties are likely to get more votes than the Center in the forthcoming elections, but the left is not an attractive alternative for conservative-minded voters opposed to Gaullism.

The Gaullist "Family"

Like its opponents, the Gaullist "family" has its internal differences. The important components, however, will probably stick together at least through the elections because of their fundamental loyalty to De Gaulle. They are increasingly inclined to put faith in the viability of the political institutions of the Fifth Republic and in De Gaulle's key concept of national independence.

Nonetheless, the lesson implicit in De Gaulle's failure to win a first-ballot victory last time was not lost on them. That election made it clear that the Gaullists would do well to build their own political future rather than to rely wholly on De Gaulle himself for political nourishment and inspiration. In the 1962 parliamentary elections, many a candidate rode into the National Assembly on the general's coat-tails--a maneuver less likely to succeed in 1967. According to the results of a recent poll, a candidate's attachment to the Fifth Republic and its institutions is more important to the voter than the candidate's attachment to De Gaulle.

The Gaullist "family" has three branches of unequal size and importance. By far the strongest element is the Union for the New Republic (UNR), which has more than 200 deputies in the National Assembly. To its left is the Democratic Labor Party (UDT), which formally associated with the UNR in 1962. To the right of the UNR are former finance minister Valery Giscard d'Estaing's Independent Republicans, who have provided the votes necessary to maintain a Gaullist majority but who retain a distinct political identity.

Although the UDT wing has only 17 assembly deputies, it is important because its identification with leftist thinking serves as a counter to the rightist label of the Gaullists, and because some of its leaders are close to De Gaulle. The UDT deputies, who want to move certain of their economic and social ideas to the fore, will be working at cross purposes with the more conservative Independent Republicans.

The Independent Republicans' drive to establish a separate position within the Gaullist majority was probably accelerated by Giscard's departure from the cabinet last January. Pro-Gaullism remains their main stock-in-trade. Nonetheless, Giscard is attempting to give the party a political personality and an electoral appeal of its own by making suggestions for future action, particularly in the monetary field, without flatly contradicting present government policy. The former

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minister is determined to advance his own political fortunes and those of his party at the expense both of his nominal allies in the UNR/UDT and of his rival in the opposition, Lecanuet's Democratic Center. In many respects, the programs of the Center and the Independent Republicans are similar and the two are competing for the same electorate.

As a result of an implicit threat by Giscard to run Independent Republicans against the Gaullists in the forthcoming elections, the Independents have won some Gaullist-approved candidacies. This has been arranged by the "Action Committee for the Fifth Republic" established by the Gaullists. This committee has succeeded in getting agreement on single candidates in all but three or four constituencies, and in drafting an election manifesto satisfactory to all factions.

Outlook

The reaction of the voters to certain of De Gaulle's major foreign policy goals--rapprochement with Russia, withdrawal from NATO, independence from the US--has by

and large been favorable, and until very recently the opposition has found little to exploit. The government is more vulnerable on economic and social policy, however, and in this area the opposition may be able to turn voter discontent into positive support for the non-Gaullist parties. The job situation has worsened in the past few weeks, and a further rise in unemployment is in prospect early in the year.

Nevertheless, the electoral combination that could most effectively challenge the government--a united, democratic opposition embracing both the center and the left--is not yet in sight. The alliance that the Communists and the Federation have devised falls considerably short of a formal "popular front" which could aspire to power. In contrast, the Gaullist grouping is having at least some temporary success in submerging its differences. In any case, the government parties are certain to take every opportunity to remind the French voter that it was "sterile" party politics that created the chaos of the Fourth Republic.

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